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Impact of Politico-economic Situations on English Language Education in Korea

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This study explores the impact of politico-economic conditions of Korea on English language education in the 123-year-long history, following Cooper's (1989) framework of analyzing conditional factors influencing the decision making of language policies. The history of English education is classified into the six periods which are overlapped with Korea's political contexts and national curriculum reforms: the end of Joseon Dynasty (1883~1910); the Japanese colonial time (1910~1945); after liberation from Japan till 1955 including the U.S. military government (1945~1955); from the First Republic to the military rule (Supreme Council for National Reconstruction) (1955~1963); from the Third to the Fifth Republic (1963~1992); and from the Citizens' Government till the Participatory Government (1992~the present). The paper also discusses current reforms of the national English curriculum. Finally, it deals with major issues and challenges in English education and provides suggestions for the future. (140 words)

I. INTRODUCTION

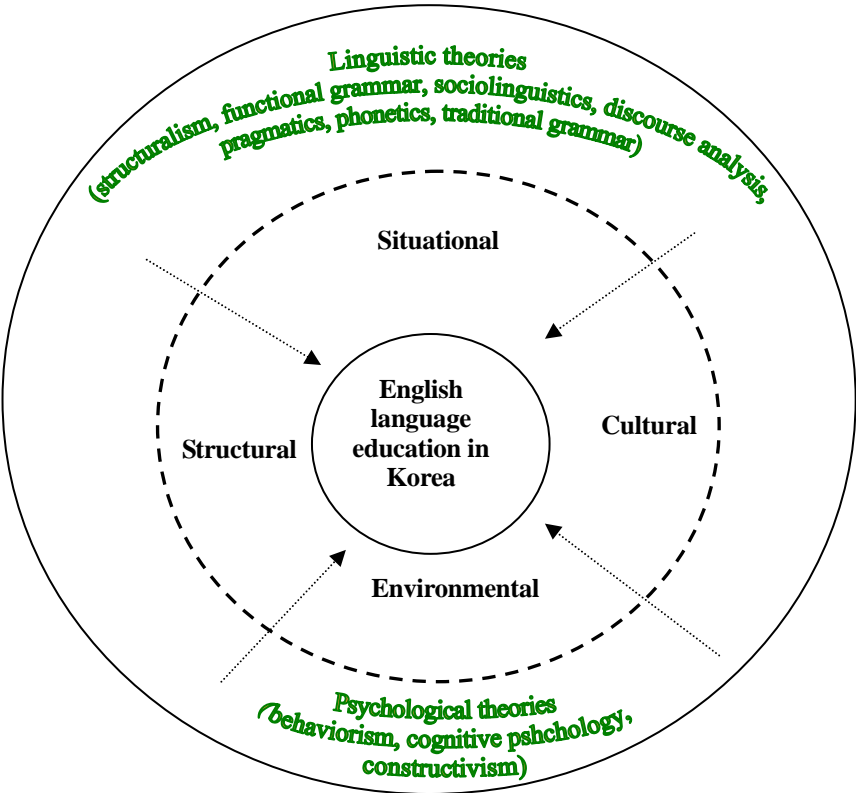
Education or language policies including English language education policies are closely linked to the political conditions of each nation. Korea is not an exception. From the beginning English language education was highly interlinked to the political and economical conditions of Korea. It has been strongly controlled by the Korean government because of the highly centralized education under an authoritarian government since the late 19th Century.

Foreign language teaching reflects the kind of proficiency learners need currently and the linguistic and psychological theories of the nature of language or language learning, as stated in Richards and Rogers (1986). Thus, changes in language teaching reflect changes

in these aspects. However, these changes are actualized through politico-economic conditions of each nation, as shown in Figure 1. For example, even if language is defined as functions or communication in the theory of foreign language teaching, this cannot be adopted to English education in Korea because of political situations such as military governments.

Thus, this paper will explore the impact of politico-economic conditions of Korea on English education in six major periods. It will be examined following Cooper’s (1989) framework of analyzing conditional factors which influence the decision making of language policies. They include situational, structural, cultural, and environmental factors.

FIGURE 1
Impact of Linguistic and Psychological Theories on English Language Education Through Situational, Structural, Cultural and Environmental Factors of the Nation



First, situational factors are temporary conditions or events. They include economic cycles, political events, and natural disasters. Examples of Korean situational factors would be the Korean War or the change of government after liberation in 1945. Next, structural factors are relatively unchanging features of the political, economic, social and demographic structures. For example, political factors such as the Japanese colony or military governments affected the educational policies of Korea. Third, cultural factors are the attitudes and values held by the group within the community. Attitudes towards the Western culture during the Joseon Dynasty led to an expansion of English education. Finally, environmental factors are factors outside the system but influence the decision. These include the international political environment, borrowing policy ideas from other nations, and international agreements and pressures. The First National curriculum, for example, was based on the American framework. As shown in Figure 1, thus, English language education in Korea can be influenced by linguistic theories or psychological theories. But whether or not they have any impact on English education in Korea depends on Korea's situational, structural, cultural and environmental factors. These factors can have an impact individually or collectively. That is, more than one factor can affect English education in Korea, which will be discussed in the following sections.

The six major periods of the history of English education in Korea are classified as follows (Ki-Sang Choi, 1986; Doo-Bon Pae, 1990, 2000; Poogang Park, 1974):

- the end of Joseon Dynasty (1883~1910): the beginning and expansion of English education
- the Japanese colonial time (1910~1945): the declination, revival, and oppression of English education
- after liberation from Japan till 1955 including the U.S. military government (1945~1955): the reestablishment of English education
- from the First Republic to the military rule (Supreme Council for National Reconstruction) (1955~1963): the development of English education (the First National Curriculum in 1955)
- from the Third to the Fifth Republic (1963~1992): the stabilization and stagnation of English education (the Second (1963), the Third (1973, 1974), the Fourth (1981), the Fifth (1987, 1988) National Curriculum)
- from the Citizens' Government till the Participatory Government (1992~the present): the reform of English education (the Sixth (1992) and the Seventh (1997) National Curriculum)

This classification is closely interlinked with Korea's politico-economic conditions and national curriculum reforms which have co-occurred with new governments or presidency.

The paper will also discuss current reforms of the national English curriculum, which was issued in August, 2006. Finally, it will deal with major issues and challenges in English education and provide suggestions for the future.

II. THE END OF THE JOSEON DYNASTY (1883~1910) AND THE JAPANESE COLONIAL TIME (1910~1945)

English language education was not officially launched in Korea until 1883, when the first modern school, Dongmunhak, (the Government English School) was established, because of Joseon Dynasty's political policy (the policy of seclusion). English education was launched and expanded under the influence of two political factors (modernization and enlightenment movement, and propagandism of Christianity) and of two key groups (King Gojong and government officers, and American missionaries) (Poogang Park, 1974), as shown in Table 1.

Since Korea started contact with Westerners and Western cultures in the 16th Century, a need of learning foreign languages including English rose and a strong movement for modernization budded out. However, it was after Korea joined a trade treaty with Japan (1876) and other nations (1882), and opened its door to them when the Korean government needed Korean people with a command of English for international relations and trade. In 1883, thus, an English language school, Dongmunhak, was opened to train interpreters. It was a type of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (English for Interpreters). In 1886, Yukyeong-gongwon (the Royal English School), Korea's first school in a modern sense, was founded to introduce Western studies to Korea, especially to noble people. It mainly provided English education to aristocrats including government officials and scholars; they learned English for their career (ESP). Due to administration problems (all the American missionary teachers left Korea) and diplomatic pressures from Japan, the school closed in 1894, and was replaced by the Government Foreign Language School (Doo-Bon Pae, 2002; Poogang Park, 1974).

King Gojong's determined desire for Korea's modernization had a significant impact on the expansion of the English education in Korea between 1894 and 1910, as English education began for modernization in Japan (Koike, 1994). After the Kap-o Reform (1894), the king issued an edict opening the doors of state-operated schools to citizens of all classes, believing in the value of education as a solid basis for national development (modernization) in 1895. In 1894 the government school for foreign languages was established by merging foreign language schools such as the Japanese School (1891) and the English School (1894) (used to be Yukyeong-gongwon) (Poogang Park, 1974).

The second main actor of English education at the end of Joseon Dynasty was Western

Christian missionaries and an American doctor who opened missionary high schools (secondary schools) or a medical school to teach English, including Baejae Hakdang (Baejae Academy), Ewha Hakdang (Ewha Girls School), Gyeongsin School, and State Joseon Hospital Medical School (renamed as Jeyjungwon and then as Severance Medical School) (Poogang Park, 1974; Insoo Sohn, 1992). It was the impact of situational factors. They had a great contribution to the expansion of English education in Korea. Since the Korean people, especially young adults, had a strong desire for education (Gale, 1909) and a strong instrumental motivation to learn English, Western missionaries chose teaching English for missionary purposes. These missionary schools made a great contribution to the early development of modern education system in Korea.

TABLE 1
Politico-Economic Actors of English Education Policies at the End of Joseon Dynasty
and in the Japanese Colonial Time (1883~1945)

Political Context	Main Politico-Economic Causes/Actors	English Education
The end of Joseon Dynasty (1883~1910): the beginning and expansion of English education	Modernization and enlightenment movement/King Gojong, government officers, and pioneers	-Opening of the first English language school, Dongmunhak (1883~1886) -Establishment of Yukyeong-gongwon (1886~1894) -Opening of the Government Hanseong Foreign Language School including the English Language School (1894)
	Propagandism of Christianity to Korea/American missionaries	-Establishment of private mission schools (e.g., Baejae Academy (1885), Ewha Girls School (1885) (English was the main subject)
	Impact of Japanese government (1905~1910)	-Suspension of English education (1903~1907) -Replacement of English education by Japanese education -Closing of the Government Hanseong Foreign Language School
The Japanese colonial time (1910 with Japanese, the Japanese~1945): the declination, revival, and oppression of English education	Assimilation policy of Koreans with Japanese, the Japanese-diffusion policy in school education	-Japanese as the national language (1910) -English as an elective subject at high schools (secondary schools) -English education in private missionary schools (weakening of missionaries' education)
	The policy of culture	-The reestablishment of foreign language education and the strengthening of the status of English education -Secondary school English teacher certificate (1928)
	The Japanese-only policy (1939) and the wartime policy of economy and education (1938~1945)	-Weakening of English education at secondary schools (its replacement with Chinese education) (1938) -Suppression of mission schools and expulsion of missionaries (repatriation of all American missionaries with other Americans in 1942)

English education was still mainly for educating people to be government officials, but it became more popularized. It expanded greatly between 1895 and 1905. It was an impact of cultural factors, that is, attitudes of Korean people (especially politicians including the king) toward English and English education. English, with government backing, grew into the status of the most popular foreign language. However, English education declined gradually since Japan won at the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and at the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. The influence of Japanese government on Korea increased significantly after Ulsa Protectorate Treaty in 1905. These environmental factors led to the decline of English education, for example, the exclusion of English subject in the curriculum of Baejae School in 1903. In 1904 English was no longer used as the medium of class in that school (Moffet, 1962), as Korean was used in the English class of other private and government/public schools. Japanese education gradually replaced English education (Poogang Park, 1974).

English education during the Japanese colonial time, in the second period of the history, was mainly influenced by the Japanese colonial government's language and education policies, and war-time policy of economy and education for its war effort, as shown in Table 1. That is, the political structural factors had a strong impact on it. It can be classified into three periods: the period of declination (1910~1922), the period of revival (1922~1938), and the period of oppression (1938~1945) (Poogang Park, 1974). Since 1905, Japanese became a required school subject, whereas the status of other foreign languages including English weakened. The period of declination began after the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910. Japanese became the national language and the colonial government established a highly centralized educational system (Kim-Rivera, 2002). In 1911 the Japanese government issued the first educational ordinance for Korea and the private school regulations to control private school education. The government regulations on private professional schools (colleges) were issued in 1915. It was the beginning of the government's strong control on college education.

During this period Korean people had a strong motivation for learning Japanese rather than English. Only in high school education for boys was two-hour English education per week offered as an elective subject (Insoo Sohn, 1992), which was the main channel of English education at that period (Poogang Park, 1974). Despite the Japanese residency-government's intensified suppression of private education in Korea, English education was maintained in private colleges, especially in private mission colleges such as Ewha College (1910), Severance Medical School (1913), and Yeonhui College (1915).

The period of revival began after World War I. The American president's announcement of three principles to maintain world peace including the liberation of colonies at the end of the war stimulated worldwide independence movement of colonies including Korea's 1919 Independence Movement. In 1919, the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea

was established in Shanghai. The Japanese residency-government realized that its oppressive military rule over Korea had not been effective. Thus, it adopted an easement policy of tensions, the cultural policy. It carried out a number of educational reforms, including the establishment of a university (Gyeongseong Imperial University) (Kim- Rivera, 2002) and reestablished foreign language education. Especially, the status of English strengthened. English was offered as a required subject in high schools (secondary school) and higher education, and departments of English language and literature were established in universities and professional schools. Since high school and higher education were provided for more number of people, more people learned English. It was an expansion of English education in a quantitative aspect. English became part of the college entrance examination in Gyeongseong Imperial University (1924), which was the beginning of English education for testing. For the first time, secondary school English teacher certificate was also issued in the colony to those who graduated from Ewha College (Poogang Park, 1974).

However, the Japanese residency-government's positive role in the development of English education did not last long. Since the mid 1930s, the power of the military in Japan ascended, which led to the promulgation of the third (1938), the fourth (1943), and the wartime (1945) educational ordinance for military purposes and to the dramatic decline of English education. The third period from 1938 to 1945 is thus called as the period of oppression, which was featured as the wartime education (1938~1945) and the adoption of the Japanese-only Policy (1939). During this period, Japanese non-linguistic policies had a strong impact on English education in Korea, which included the mobilization of Korea and its educational system to support the Japanese war effort. They further refer to the total assimilation policy of Koreans with Japanese, which led to the weakening of English education in government schools and suppression on mission schools (the center of English education in Korea at that time), with declaration of English as an enemy language (Kim-Rivera, 2002). Japanese government prohibited Koreans' study in or trip to Europe or America (in the late 1930s till 1945). Likewise, the import of Western books including English language textbooks and literature was banned in 1938, and so was the use of English expressions of all kinds of objects including signs on school facilities. Professors educated in Europe or America without Japanese command were expelled, and they were replaced by Japanese-ethnic instructors (Ewha 100nyonsa Phyonchannwiwonhoe, 1994). Furthermore, the Japanese colonial government adopted an Korean Erasure and Japanese-Only policy. The Japanese government placed a strong focus on the diffusion of Japanese language in Korea. During the period of oppression, English education almost ended (Kim-Rivera, 2002).

III. AFTER LIBERATION FROM JAPAN TILL 1955 (1945~1955) AND FROM THE FIRST REPUBLIC TO THE MILITARY RULE (1955~1963)

Korea's liberation from Japan in 1945 marked a turning point in the history of education. As Korea underwent a transition from totalitarian rule to democracy, the primary concern was to provide equal educational opportunities to all people. It was the beginning of a dramatic expansion of education in general (1945~1970) and English education. The situation factor, liberation from Japan, was one of the main factors that had a strong impact on English education in this period.

English education of this twenty-year period after liberation from Japan till the beginning of the Third Republic can be classified into the following four periods:

- the period of cornerstone (1945~1950): the U.S. military administration (political and economic chaos), the promulgation of the Constitution of Korea
- the period of stagnation (1950~1953): the Korean War
- the period of reconstruction (1953~1955): the First Republic (1948~1960) (a strong alignment with America supported by the President Rhee Seungman)
- the period of development (1955~1963): the First Republic (1948~1960), the April Revolution, the Second Republic (1960~1960), and the military rule after a military coup d'état (the First National Curriculum)

The main actors of English education during these periods are the Korean government and officers of the Ministry of Education (MOE); however, the U.S. military government also had a significant impact, which established a cornerstone of its reestablishment (see Table 2). Thus, it was strongly influenced by situational and (political) structural factors. In August of 1945, when Korea was liberated from Japan, the American military administration began, which promulgated an educational edict for reopening all schools in November. It did not implement sweeping educational reforms; however, it laid the foundations for reforms which were implemented early in the First Republic. In 1946, a council of about 100 Korean educators was organized as an advising educational committee for the MOE to map out the future path of Korean education. In 1949, this council reformed the school system into five school levels: preschool, primary school, secondary school, higher education, and specialized education. During the U.S. military administration, the American supervisor of English strongly urged the necessity of language instruction in Korea. The following needs were pointed out (Taesoo Jeong, 1992).

- the necessity of acquisition of Western knowledge and technical aids
- the needs of the English language as a means for advances in technology

Thus, a strong emphasis was placed on English education with a belief in the value of the English language as a means for the development of Korea. The goal of English education gave prominence to the interrelationship among individuals, international society, and nation, with a focus on fostering Koreans' patriotism. English became a required subject in the college entrance examination, which was the revival of English education for preparing for tests. As part of the movement which aimed at the total eradication of vestiges of Japanese imperialism, an effort was made to adopt American educational philosophy, which was illustrated in the reading passages and topics of English language textbooks (Eun-Kyung Moon, 2005).

TABLE 2
Politico-Economic Actors of English Education Policies after Liberation
from Japan till the Military Rule (1945~1963)

Political Context	Main Politico-Economic Causes/Actors	English Education
After liberation from Japan till 1955 including the U.S. military government (1945~1955): the reestablishment of English education	<p>The U.S. military administration- Restart of the education of the English language (formation of the national educational committee in 1945)</p> <p>(issue of the middle school English curriculum in 1946)</p> <p>The Korean War (1950~1953)</p> <p>The Korean government (The First Republic) (1948~1960)</p>	<p>as the first foreign language (1945)</p> <p>-English as a required and the only foreign language in middle school, and as a required one in high school besides another foreign language</p> <p>-Freshmen English program at higher education (1945)</p> <p>-Stagnation of English education because of the Korean War as well as education in general (1950~1953)</p> <p>-Reconstruction of English education after the war</p>
The First and the Second Republic, and the military rule (Supreme Council for National Reconstruction) (1955~1963) (The First National Curriculum): the reconstruction of English education	<p>The Korean government (The First Republic) / MOE (a strong alignment with America) (the educational ideal of Hongik Ingan (a person who is of benefit to all) to prepare students for participation in a democratic society) (1948~1960)</p>	<p>-A new English curriculum for middle school and high school: holistic approach to teaching; application of structuralism and applied linguistics; selection of teaching contents based on contrastive analysis of Korean and English; a balanced practice of the four language skills; adoption of American English</p> <p>-Learning American English, a large proportion of the topics of the English textbooks related to America (promotion of American thoughts)</p> <p>-English as an elective subject in secondary school (1955)</p>

The ministry of education during the American military administration started enacting

school curriculum for different levels in October, 1945. The middle school English curriculum (called as syllabus) was issued in 1946. It was the beginning of a systematic way of teaching English at secondary school. It gave prominence to both the cultural and practical value of English education, but it mainly emphasized the acquisition of knowledge on English rather than its use. Daniel Jones' *The Pronouncing Dictionary* was the standard of pronunciation rather than American English. Americanism was specified as a caution in the curriculum, which suggests that British English pronunciation was adopted. In middle school, English was the only foreign language subject that was required. In high school, on the other hand, one or two foreign languages were supposed to be selected among English, German, French, and Chinese. Top priority was given to English education. Professional schools put a great effort on their reconstruction. From 1945 to 1946, most of them were authorized to colleges or universities. They began freshmen English program. Departments of English language and literature were established in many universities including Seoul National University in 1946. Furthermore, departments of English education were established including Daegu National University of Education in 1946 (Me-Kyoung Kwag & Jae-Hun Choi, 2005). Most of the professors of these departments were educated in Japanese universities or in Gyeongseong Imperial University so that their teaching methods were not different from those used under the Japanese colonial rule (Poogang Park, 1974).

When the Korean War broke out, normalization of school education was suspended. An extensive damage was done on education. However, most of the schools reopened in 1951, and in 1953 they had a full recovery, which required an extensive period of time to overcome the negative impact of the war. During the war, Yeongeogyoyukyeonguhwo (English Education Research Association) was organized in Busan in 1952, as part of the U.S. military administration's effort to restore English education (Doo-Bon Pae, 2000).

After the Korean War, a great deal of effort was made to reconstruct Korean education as well as economy. It is a developmental period of English education after the Korean War. Its main actors of this period were the political and economical policies of the First Republic, which mainly relied on the U.S. government militarily and economically. It was also a period of the First National Curriculum (promulgated in August, 1955), which was a revision of the curriculum issued in 1946 (under the U.S. military government) in an extensive scale to make it fit to the Korean context (Eun-Kyung Moon, 2005). The main focus was given to a whole-person education. It was revised because of a change of regime. However, the curriculum was still a copy of other countries' educational curricula including the American ones, like the curriculum issued in 1946 (Ki-Sang Choi, 1986). The First National Curriculum of middle and high school English specified the value and purpose of the English education, the main principles of the English curriculum, the English curriculum itself (including learning contents), and the guidelines of its implementation. A new system

of the English education was established, that is, a holistic approach to teaching (teaching all language elements and skills as one subject) rather than an analytic one (e.g., teaching conversation, reading, composition, and grammar, separately), which was used before. Ideally, thus, a balanced practice of the four language skills was emphasized, though in reality the main learning contents were grammar and reading. In the curriculum, English was specified as an elective subject in secondary school, though almost all the secondary school students studied English (3~5 hours per week) in middle school and 0~5 hours per week in high school). The curriculum was based on the American framework of foreign language teaching, such as contrastive analysis, American structuralism and behaviorism, and the Audiolingual Method because of Korea's close relations with the U.S. government. This is an example of the impact of environmental factors, such as borrowing policy ideas from other nations. The learning contents were selected on the basis of the contrastive analysis of Korean and English. Thus, they were mainly grammar and structures. Basically, the Audiolingual Method as well as the Grammar Translation Method was used with a focus on learning English structures through repeated practice (pattern drills). A more noticeable impact of Korea's political context of this period is the adoption of American English as the standard English and a large proportion of American topics in the secondary school English textbooks (Eun-Kyung Moon, 2005).

IV. FROM THE THIRD TO THE SIXTH REPUBLIC (1963~1992)

English education in the Third (1963~1972), the Fourth (1972~1979), the Fifth (1979~1987), and the Sixth (1987~1992) Republic, which are all military governments, are classified into two periods: the Third Republic is a period of stabilization of English education after the promulgation of the Second National Curriculum in 1963; and the Fourth, the Fifth, and the Sixth Republic is a stagnation period (Doo-Bon Pae, 1990). The first period was a period after political turmoil caused by the authoritative dictatorship of the first president, the students movement against it (the April Revolution), the Second Republic (a politically unstable government), and the military rule after a military coup d'état. It was influenced by political situational and structural factors. In other words, the second curriculum reform was strongly affected by the propaganda of the military government which pursued strengthening the dictatorship of the president. It had a strong impact of the manpower planning of the government owing to the rapid development of the Korean economy, which led to the needs of skilled manpower. Thus, a focus was placed on vocational and technical education at high school. An educational reform was performed in an extensive scale to cope with the dramatically changing political and social conditions of Korea.

TABLE 3
Politico-Economic Actors of English Education Policies from the Third to the Sixth Republic
(1963 ~ 1992)

Political Context	Main Politico-Economic Causes/Actors	English Education
The Third Republic (1963 ~ 1972) (The Second National Curriculum): the stabilization of English education	<p>The Korean government (the Third Republic, the military government)/ MOE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rapid economic development (five-year economic plans) -Manpower planning: the Second National Curriculum in 1963 -School education policy to deal with current social issues at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -English as a required subject in secondary school (more weight given to it than in the First Curriculum) -The goal of English education includes socialization of English education (from learner-centered education to society-centered education)
The Fourth, the Fifth, and the Sixth Republic (1972 ~ 1992) (The Third, the Fourth, and the Fifth National Curriculum): the stagnation of English education	<p>The Korean government (the Fourth Republic, 1972 ~ 1979)/MOE (the adoption of Yusin Constitution in 1972)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The propaganda of the military governments for strengthening the dictatorship of the president -Rapid economic development owing to high quality human resources provided through education -Manpower planning: the Third National Curriculum (1973) (knowledge-centered curriculum) -Establishment of diplomatic relations with other nations including Canada <p>The Korean government (the Fifth Republic, 1979 ~ 1988)/MOE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The propaganda of the main policies of the military government (manifestation of Korea as a democratic state/globalization and the open-door policy preparing for the '88 Seoul Olympic Games) -The Fourth National Curriculum (1981) (human-centered curriculum): upbringing of the Korean people as autonomous and creative -The fifth five-year economic plan with a focus on a harmonious development between economy and society <p>The Korean government (the Sixth Republic, 1987 ~ 1993)/MOE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The first president elected through a democratic procedure -Laws for the promotion of local autonomy -The Fifth National Curriculum (1987) (education for humanity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Presentation of basic sentence patterns of English and grammatical structures in the Third National Curriculum -Reinstitution of learning the grammar of English -Unification of English textbooks (only one textbook) -Too high level of sentence patterns and too large quantity of learning contents because of the knowledge-centered curriculum -Recognition of English as an international language -Increase of middle school English class hours per week -Emphasis placed on living English -Authorized high school English textbooks -Reduction of the quantity of the learning contents -Selection of topics related to student interests, needs, and cognitive levels -Reincrease of middle school English class hours per week -Start of elementary school English education as extracurricular activities -Authorization of foreign languages high school -Focus given on development of conversation skills -Emphasis placed on living English, learning language skills rather than grammar, for national and social needs -The use of audio-visual materials -Emphasis on spoken language over written language to advertize the democratic characteristics of the new government, but use of structural syllabus -Authorized middle school English textbooks as well as high school textbooks -Revision of the nation-wide college entrance examination (CSAT) including listening test items in English

The Korean government inaugurated five-year economic development plans in the Second Republic (1962), but they were implemented from the Third Republic. They placed a focus on the growth of labor-intensive export industries (Gwang-Jo Kim, 2001). Thus, the primary goal of education was “to provide educated manpower to the economy” (Gwang-Jo Kim, 2001, p. 30). This led to the expansion of basic educational opportunities to all eligible children, which increased class size and double-shifting. In 1968, the Korean government abolished the middle school entrance examination and introduced a lottery system for student placement. It was the impact of the increased number of elementary school graduates due to free primary education, which intensified competition for entrance into secondary schools in general and elite schools in particular, and excessive financial burdens on parents because of private tutoring. Such social pressure “coincided well with an increase in the need for skilled workers caused by a rapid economic growth and high wages associated with a college degree” (Gwang-Jo Kim, 2001, p. 32). Thus, the government started a lottery system of middle school student placement based on residence rather than test scores or school records, after abolishing the middle school entrance examination. This led to education expansion at the middle school level.

One of the key school education policies was dealing with current social issues at school (Kyung-ae Youm, 1987). This affected the goals of English education so that they included socialization of English education and the focus was shifted from individual student-centered education to society-centered education, as shown in Table 3.

The stagnation period is about 20 years from the third to the fifth curriculum which was under the military governments. It was a period which was strongly influenced by situational (e.g., changes of regime or sports events such as the Olympic Games), structural (e.g., type of regime), and environmental (e.g., international relations with Western nations) factors. The third and the fourth curriculum reforms were influenced by the propaganda of the military governments (the Fourth and the Fifth Republic), which pursued strengthening the dictatorship of the president (especially the Fourth Republic, which adopted Yusin Constitution in 1972). This led to the reinstitution of learning the grammar in English education (Jiyeon Lee, 2004). The third curriculum (promulgated in 1973) included a list of basic patterns of English and grammatical structures. English textbooks were unified in order to enhance the government’s central control on education; thus, there was only one English textbook for each school year. The third curriculum was a knowledge-centered curriculum due to the impact of the Fourth Republic’s manpower planning; thus, sentence patterns provided in the English curriculum were of too high level and the quantity of learning contents was too large. The English education of this republic was also influenced by an environmental factor, that is, the diplomatic relations with other nations including Canada, which resulted in the recognition of English as an international language and the strengthening of English education. English class hours per week

increased in middle school; an emphasis was placed on living English (everyday English).

In 1981 the Fourth National Curriculum was issued. It propagandized the main policies of the Fifth Republic (a military government after a military coup d'état) including manifestation of Korea as a democratic state (a structural factor), and globalization and the open-door policy (an environmental factor) preparing for the '88 Seoul Olympic Games (a situational factor). It was a human-centered curriculum for upbringing the Korean people as autonomous and creative. It was a period of qualitative development of education. The international relations of the republic promoted elementary school English education in the fourth curriculum. In some private or public schools English was taught as an extracurricular subject. Foreign languages high schools were also authorized in 1984. Use of living English was emphasized (MOE, 1995). The government's attempt of disguising the dictatorship of the president as a democratic state had some impact on English education: officially authorized high school English textbooks rather than one state high school textbook; reduction of the quantity of the learning contents (especially, the number of words to study per year) to reduce the students' learning load; focus shift from learning of grammar to development of conversation skills for national and social needs (but the syllabus was still structural); selection of topics related to student interests, needs, and cognitive levels; re-increase of middle school English class hours per week (4 for the first-year and 3~5 hours for the second- and third-year); and acquisition of oral language on the basis of written language (but in reality the focus was still on written language).

The fifth curriculum reform (influenced by situational factors) was implemented under a more democratic government than before because the president was elected by the people (the Sixth Republic, 1987~1993). The government attempted to advertize its democratic characteristics to the public as much as possible (the impact of a structural factor). Its main impact was a focus shift from written English into oral English. Listening items were included in a new college entrance examination (announced in 1991 and implemented in 1994). But, structural syllabus was still used as in the previous curricula of the other military governments. The government issued laws for the promotion of local autonomy in 1991, which led to the establishment of educational district offices at the provincial/local level, setting a new benchmark in the democratization and localization of education. Since English education specialists with foreign doctoral degrees (especially American degrees) increased, attempts were made to utilize the results of the research on foreign language teaching overseas (MOE, 1995), especially those of the studies in the U.S. (an environmental factor).

V. FROM THE CITIZENS' GOVERNMENT TO THE PARTICIPATORY GOVERNMENT(1992~THE PRESENT)

Compared to any period of English education in Korea, top priority is given to English education currently for national development, globalization, or individual career or welfare in the future. After a period of stagnation, a great reform was performed on English education since 1992 (the Sixth National Curriculum). It was strongly influenced by the president's policies of each government (the impact of situational and structural factors), as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Politico-Economic Actors of English Education Policies from the Citizens' Government to the Participatory Government (1992~the present)

Political Context	Main Politico-Economic Causes/Actors	English Education
The Citizens' Government (1993 ~1998) (President Kim Young-sam: the country's first civilian president): The Sixth National Curriculum	The Korean government/MOE/ the Presidential Commission for the National Educational Committee -The president's 'New Korea' policy -The president's policy for the age of information and globalization	-Strengthening of foreign languages education including English education/start of elementary school English as a regular subject (1997) -The goal of English education for national development and globalization -Focus on learning English for practical purposes -The Communicative Approach, anti-grammar teaching, and functional syllabus -Learner-centered education -High school elective subjects including English reading, conversation, and Business English -Use of audio-visual materials including computer (video tapes for elementary school English textbooks) -Employment of foreign teachers (native speakers)
The People's Government (1998 ~2003) (first peaceful democratic transition of power): The Seventh National Curriculum	The Korean government/the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE&HRD)/ the Presidential Commission for the New Educational Community -Renaming of MOE as MOE&HRD to establish, oversee, and coordinate human resource development policies on a national level (2001) -The 2002 Korean-Japan World Cup -The Seventh National Curriculum (1997) for the 21 C globalization	-The goal of English education for national development and globalization: focus on positive attitudes toward being a world citizen (focus on everyday English and communicative abilities); and on the formation of national community and national development -National elementary school English textbook (single textbook policy for elementary school English in 2000) -Learner-centered education: differentiated curriculum (individualization of learning); elective

	and information society: a national common basic curriculum, open education for the 21 C	subjects in high school -Focus on learning of oral language -Performance assessment -Multimedia-assisted language learning (ICT): CD-ROM titles for elementary and secondary school English textbooks
The Participatory Government (2003 ~ the present)	The Korean government/ MOE & HRD -The increase of the number of students leaving for study abroad at early ages (mainly to learn foreign languages (e.g., English) and avoid extreme competition for college entrance) -The Jeju Free International City (2008) -Revision of the Seventh National Curriculum (2006)	 -Opening of the first English village in Ansan City, Gyeonggi Province (2004) to promote English education and to build students' international cultural awareness/The Experience English village in Seoul (2004) -A full nation-wide implementation of elementary school English education from first grade (2008) -English as a second official language in Jeju Island: implementation of English immersion education (2008) -more effective implementation of level-sensitive curriculum (e.g., one basic textbook with one workbook for three levels together)

In the Citizen's Government (1993 ~ 1998), the President Kim Young-sam's 'New Korea' policy to fight corruption and revitalize Korea's straining economy and his policy for the age of information and globalization led to strengthening of foreign language education. It included English education: four hours per week from first-year middle school to first-year high school, and 5 ~ 6 hours in second- and third-year high school (elective); start of elementary school English as a regular subject (in 1997) and development of authorized elementary school English textbooks including video tapes; focus on learning English for practical purposes; the adoption of the communicative approach, the functional syllabus, and fluency-focused education; and anti-grammar teaching (exclusion of the list of grammatical structures and sentence patterns). It is an example of an impact of environmental factors. These reforms were also based on the report of the Globalization Steering Committee (in 1995) (emphasizing the important function of foreign languages in the global community and pointing out key problems of English education which included too much focus on memorization and grammar learning). In addition, the president's policies led to the use of computer and Internet for English education in classrooms. Likewise, the goals of English education in the sixth curriculum were set up for national development and globalization: focus on international collaboration, introduction of Korea's advances in science and technology, utilization of a variety of information (for enhancing national competitiveness), and inclusion of the national image as a unified nation. Because of the pressure from international trade markets, native speakers of English were employed as teachers of

English in 1992 (the impact of environmental factors), as the Japanese government invited native English-speaking assistant teachers of English in 1985 as part of its economic policy (Koike, 1994). It was the MOE's project of 'English Program in Korea' (EPIK) (Oryang Kwon, 2000). Furthermore, the Korean government policies emphasizing education of environment and technology and local autonomous administration resulted in the inclusion of topics such as environmental issues and technology in English textbooks and of those related to local autonomy.

The second reform period of English education started when the national curriculum was reformed in 1997. This new curriculum was revised to reflect the new educational demands and the emerging needs of the society, under the principles of strengthening elementary and basic knowledge and skills, increasing voluntary study capabilities, practicing student-centered education; and increasing autonomy at the local and school levels. In the area of English education, for instance, elective English subjects (e.g., English reading, conversation, and composition) have been provided in high schools. The main goal of English education was for national development and globalization. The focus was placed on positive attitudes toward being a world citizen and communicative ability in everyday English, which were necessary for the formation of 'open' community and national development. The 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup provided strong impetus for globalization and strengthened foreign language education. To improve communicative ability in English, learning oral language was emphasized. Advanced technology and high-speed Internet were actively incorporated into school education (in 2002) (Eunhee Choi, 2006). Digital nervous system was established, and online as well as offline learning was promoted nationwide. Multimedia-assisted language learning (Information Communication Technology) was encouraged, and CD-ROM titles for primary and secondary school English textbooks were developed and distributed to local schools. As a consequence of reevaluation of grammar teaching, a more moderate syllabus was developed incorporating both functional and structural components. It does not mean to abandon the communicative language instruction, but the necessity to have a more balanced approach in terms of structure of language is acknowledged, as in Singapore in 2001 (Chew, 2003). Furthermore, the government revised the college admission system to determine admission based on diverse types of information on students in the mid-1990s: the CSAT (College Scholastic Aptitude Test) score in conjunction with the students' high school record and other elements, such as extra-curricular activity hours, essays, and in-depth interview. In the late 1990s, the system was also revised to allow students with diverse skills and abilities to be admitted to college by submitting an official document verifying their skills and abilities including the result of a nation-wide English speech and/or composition contest or the TOEFL or TOEIC score. This enhanced people's needs to learn English.

In 2003, the Participatory Government was formed. The new government initiated a few changes in English education. One of the new attempts was opening the first English village in Ansan City, Gyeonggi Province (in 2004), to promote English education and to build students' international awareness. It also aimed to satisfy students' desire to study English in natural and authentic contexts. Actually, the number of students leaving the country to study abroad at early ages increased from 4,397 in 2000 to 16,446 in 2004 (Eunhee Choi, 2006). Although one of the causes for studying abroad is to avoid extreme competition for college entrance, the main purpose is to learn foreign languages, particularly, English. In the similar vein, implementation of elementary school English education from the first grade may also begin in 2008 (Eunhee Choi, 2006). This means that English education would start two years earlier compared to the current system. Another change would be introduced in Jeju Island. It is planned to adopt English as a second official language and to implement English immersion program from the year of 2008, when Jeju would be declared as a Free International City in Korea (Eunhee Choi, 2006).

The revised Seventh National Curriculum was just issued in August, 2006. Several alternations have been made. One of the major revisions is to effectively implement level-sensitive curriculum in English classrooms than in the original seventh curriculum. Thus, a basic textbook supplemented by one workbook for different levels (high, intermediate, and low) will be constructed. Second, written language instruction, reading and writing, will be given earlier than in the current curriculum (e.g., one semester earlier for reading from the second semester of the third grade).

VI. CURRENT ISSUES

As revealed in the review on the history of English language education in Korea, it has been highly controlled by the government (the strong impact of political structural factors) since the very early stages. However, this top-down approach is no longer an effective means in the period of decentralization. As seen in the example of Jeju Island, language education should be adapted for regional needs. An example is also noted in China, which allows economically developed areas, such as Shanghai, to construct their own English syllabi to encourage educational innovation and diversity of English provision in order to cater for varying local needs (Hu, 2005). This decentralization issue is also related to problems caused by discrepancy in students' English ability across the nation. Though students of metropolitan areas and those in remote island areas have diverse English abilities because of their socio-economic context (e.g., private tutoring, contact with native speakers, or language training overseas), both groups have to study English using the same

textbook based on the same national curriculum. Regional development or adaptation of curricula or textbooks, or school discretionary activities should be thus ratified to meet such regional needs. In addition, diverse supports for schools that are lagging behind in socio-economic aspects (e.g., financial support, distribution of education facilities, ICT instructional materials, or redeployment and intensive retraining of teachers) should be provided, as suggested in Mee-Kyeong Lee (2005), in order to ensure equal access to quality English education across the nation. Regionalization of education or establishment of Regional Innovation System (RIS) is ideally part of the policy directions of the MOE&HRD in preparation for the future society (Young Shik Kim, 2005). As the same problems have been repeated, however, what is essential for its practice is the government's willingness to support for the regionalization policy including educating teachers, students, and society about regional adaptation of the national curriculum or development of school-based curriculum.

Another critical issue concerns the gap between ideals and realities. As discussed before, the national curricula have been constantly reformed by the government to make English education better or more effective by revising learning contents, syllabus, teaching and testing methods/approaches, testing techniques, weekly instructional hours, the number of vocabulary to study, and educational technology. For instance, development of communicative skills has been strongly emphasized since the fifth curriculum and use of communicative activities as the main classroom activities has been ideally suggested since the sixth curriculum. But, they have never been fully actualized. Another example is noted from level-sensitive teaching, which was introduced in the seventh curriculum. There is a consensus on its advantages among secondary school teachers (KICE, 2004a; Oryang Kwon, 2003). However, it has not been widely explored in real English classrooms (especially in elementary school) due to several reasons including practical difficulty of implementation (e.g., teachers' load of developing supplementary materials and inapplicability of level- sentence testing) (KICE, 2004a). Serious gaps between ideals and realities in the English education policies including the national curriculum reforms are also noted in inapplicability of TETE (Teaching English Through English), inappropriate utilization of performance assessment (Oryang Kwon, 2003), and impracticality of elective-based curriculum (e.g., individual students cannot choose a subject, and some subjects (e.g., English writing) are rarely selected in high school).

Furthermore, gaps between ideals and realities also lead to a fundamental question: whether reformed policies are applicable to Korean context or whether they are based on results of reliable studies on current issues. This issue is related to the absence of a Korean model of English education, especially, of secondary school English education. Until now most of the approaches and learning contents in the national curriculum have been adopted

from other countries, particularly English-speaking countries (an example of environmental factors), with no consideration of Korean situations and cultures. Even if a certain approach has been successful in another nation, it does not ensure whether it will be adaptable in Korea. In order to design a model for Korean education, a long-term plan and research is much needed.

Curriculum reforms are not fundamentally based on the results of the application of the current curriculum. Classroom-based research on it is very limited, though survey-based research is conducted by the curriculum developers (e.g., KICE, 2004b). As suggested in Doo-Bon Pae (2000), and Dongchul Son, Kee-Ho Kim, and Yeon Hee Choi (2006), curriculum reforms should be more research-based to explore major problems or limitations of current curricula and solutions for them.

Finally, Korean education struggles with the issue of distrust in public education (Young Shik Kim, 2005). The number of young children who study abroad has increased, as mentioned before, because of extreme competition for college entrance and the dissatisfaction with the English education provided in Korea. Koreans traditionally have a very strong zeal for education. Because of the social atmosphere that links one's educational background (including English ability) with social or career success, or the quality of life, they place high priority on a good educational background. These have led to extensive private education or studying abroad. To improve the public school's English education, cultivating qualified teaching force (including native and nonnative teachers) is essential. It is also critical for the issues mentioned because it is the teachers who explore new theories in classrooms or implement newly revised curricula or assessment.

VII. CONCLUSION

This paper has explored how the political and economic conditions in Korea, such as situational, structural or environmental factors, have influenced the history of English education. It is undeniable that language education policies varied much depending on the political factors, particularly, at the early stage of English education. Since modernization began in Korea, economic factors have also had strong effects on it. It would be impossible to eliminate the political and economic impact, but English education should pursue to be more independent from outside forces in the future in order to enhance its consistency and efficiency according to a variety of needs of different people and regions. Rigid central government control is no longer an effective means in the period of decentralization.

Under the broad context of decentralization, a few of suggestions for the future are

presented below. First, qualified teaching force is expected to gain more recognition in the future. Lowering the age of starting English education in elementary school will increase the demands of English teachers. The number of young children who want to study abroad cannot decrease if they are not satisfied with the English education provided in Korea. Provision of quality program is the prerequisite of successful implementation of the English villages, and once again teacher training including native and nonnative teachers is essential. Second, given the economic benefits and social prestige associated with English proficiency in Asian region (Nunan, 2003), equal access to English education of quality will strengthen educational equality and balanced national development. The issue is inevitably related to the improvement of public school English education, including extracurricular and after-school programs. Such programs may be a matter of individual choice, but the opportunity to receive quality English education at reasonable costs should not be denied to anyone. The suggestions made here would require a great amount of resources and efforts from the public and private sectors. However, the endeavors should be continued for individual welfare as well as national development.

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Applicable levels: elementary, secondary, and tertiary

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